



RUFFED GROUSE

Bonasa umbellus



The ruffed grouse is a ground-dwelling game bird of North America. They are named for the ruff of feathers that surrounds their neck. This ruff is erected when the male displays toward females and other males. The ruffed grouse is also characterized by an erect crest on the top of the head and a large tail that is erected during courtship and territorial displays. The ruffed grouse has modifications for living in areas where there is heavy snowfall, including feathered nostrils and legs. The ruffed grouse has a short, erratic and strong flight pattern. This makes it one of the most popular game birds in Michigan and many other states.



SPECIES QUICK FACTS

SIZE

The ruffed grouse is 16 to 19 inches in length.

WINGSPAN

The ruffed grouse has a wingspan of up to two feet.

FOOD HABITS

The diet of the ruffed grouse includes a lot of fruits such as thorn apples and blueberries. They also eat leaf buds, seeds, and insects.

HABITAT

The ruffed grouse prefers the shelter of deep woods, wooded swamps, and thickets.

GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION

The ruffed grouse is found throughout Canada and in the northern two-thirds of the United States. They are absent from the great plains.

FUN FACT

To attract mates and mark their territory, male Ruffed Grouse stand atop dead logs, puff out their chests, and beat their wings to produce a characteristic “drumming” that starts loud and slow and then finishes soft and fast.